

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 3835

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, CO

SUBJ: PRESIDENT LOPEZ CRITICIZES EXTREME LEFT IN ADDRESS TO
NATION

1. SPEAKING MORE VIGOROUSLY THAN HE HAS SINCE HIS CAMPAIGN FOR OFFICE, PRESIDENT LOPEZ DELIVERED A TELEVISED ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON APRIL 14. IN THE FORTY MINUTE TALK HE EXHIBITED AN UNUSUAL ANIMATION THAT APPEARED MEANT TO CONVEY THE IMAGE OF A MAN IN CHARGE. THE MESSAGE OF HIS FELLOW COLOMBIANS WAS CLEARLY A REPUDIATION OF THE EXTREME LEFT AND A CALL TO VOTERS TO REJECT THOSE EXTREMIST POLITICAL PARTIES AND METHODS OF OPERATION.

2. THE PRESIDENT LED OFF WITH EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE TO THE VARIOUS SECTORS THAT HAVE RECENTLY VOICED SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON WHAT HE CALLED THE "DEMOCRATIC" LABOR FEDERATIONS, AN UNMISTAKABLE REFERENCE TO THE NON-COMMUNIST LABOR GROUPS. HE THEN SINGLED OUT THE COMMUNIST-LED POLITICAL PARTY, UNO, AND THE SELF-STYLED MARXIST AND FORMER NATION UNIVERSITY RECTOR, LUIS CARLOS PEREZ, AS EXAMPLES OF HIS CRITICS. LOPEZ REJECTED THEIR ACCUSATIONS TO THE EFFECT THAT RECENT GOVERNMENT PUBLIC ORDER DECREES WERE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE OLIGARCHY AND HE REVIEWED FOR HIS
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LISTENERS THE SERIES OF DISORDERS THAT MADE THE GOVERNMENT

ACTIONS NECESSARY. HE ADDED THAT THE SECURITY MEASURES WERE TOTALLY CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINTAINED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS SIMPLY COPYING STEPS TAKEN BY PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS.

3. LOPEZ PARTICULARLY SCORED LEFTIST LED UNIVERSITY STUDENT WHO HE SAID RIOTED NOT FOR UNIVERSITY REFORM BUT TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT THE ORIGINAL PRETEXT FOR THE STUDENT DISORDERS WAS THE VISIT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER, A MAN REPRESENTING A COUNTRY WITH WHICH COLOMBIA HAS CORDIAL RELATIONS AND A MAN WHO IS WELCOMED IN COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING SOCIALIST STATES. THE PRESIDENT REMINDED THE NATION OF THE DEATHS AND INJURIES CAUSED BY THE STUDENTS AND THEREBY JUSTIFIED THE CLOSING OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY.

4. TURNING TO THE LABOR SCENE, LOPEZ ACCUSED THE EXTREME LEFTIST INFLUENCED BANK WORKERS UNIONS OF ATTEMPTING TO SABOTAGE THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT ARBITRATION IN PUBLIC SERVICE SECTOR LABOR DISPUTES. HE ALSO CRITICIZED THE MAOIST LED TEACHERS' UNION FOR ATTEMPTING AN ILLEGAL STRIKE AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER HIS ADMINISTRATIONS'S UNPRECEDENTED STAND AGAINST THE UNION AND THE GOVERNMENT'S SUCCESS IN STOPPING THE THREATENED STRIKE. UNMISTAKABLY REFERRING TO THE COMMUNIST LED LABOR FEDERATIONS, LOPEZ WARNED COLOMBIANS THAT THE "NON-DEMOCRATIC" UNION LEADERS WERE NOT WORKING ON BEHALF OF IMPROVED CONDITIONS FOR THEIR FOLLOWERS BUT RATHER FOR POLITICAL ENDS.

5. COMPARING THE CURRENT SITUATION TO FRANCE OF SEVERAL YEARS AGO, THE PRESIDENT RECALLED THAT DE GAULLE EMPLOYED ELECTIONS AS WELL AS GUNS TO STABILIZE HIS COUNTRY. HE CALLED ON COLOMBIANS TO MAKE USE OF THE VOTE IN THE SAME MANNER AND TO REGARD THE APRIL 18 ELECTIONS AS A PLEBISCITE TO REAFFIRM DEMOCRATIC COLOMBIAN INSTITUTIONS. HE ASKED VOTERS TO REJECT THE VOICES OF VIOLENCE AND DISORDERS. LOPEZ THEN APPEALED TO THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO REMAIN SOLIDLY WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND TO FORGET ABOUT EARLIER PLANS TO ENTER INTO OPPOSITION IF THE CONSERVATIVE VOTE WERE LOW IN THE COMING ELECTIONS. HE SAID HE NEEDED THE CONSERVATIVES.

6 THE PRESIDENT FINISHED HIS ADDRESS WITH A RESTATEMENT OF PLANS TO CALL A LIMITED CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO REFORM LOCAL
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GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND THE JUDICIARY SYSTEM. HE SAID THAT SUCH REFORMS WOULD HELP STOP CORRUPTION WHERE IT IS MOST WIDESPREAD.

7. COMMENT: LOPEZ'S STRONG WORDS ON THE HEELS OF RECENT DECISIVE SECURITY MEASURES APPEAR TO BE PART OF AN OVERALL NEW "GET TOUGH" POSTURE. IN THE PAST THE PRESIDENT SHOWED HIMSELF RELUCTANT TO EMPLOY HARSH ACTIONS TO COUNTER DISORDERS, MAINLY

INSTIGATED BY THE EXTREME LEFT. APPARENTLY HE FEELS THAT CERTAIN
GROUPS HAVE GONE TOO FAR IN CHALLENGING THE AUTHORITY OF THE
GOVERNMENT AND HIS IS NOW WILLING TO DO WHATEVER NECESSARY TO
FACE THOSE GROUPS DOWN.
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